

Essays and Contributions.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ILLIO-KOTA MISSION BOARD.

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The *Missionary department* of the Christian system is of vast importance to the success of the work of the church. Pastoral work I would not belittle nor place in the back grounds. True evangelistic efforts, the saving of the lost one, the "turning of the sinner from the error of his way," does not only express the true characteristic of the child of God, but supplies the necessary conditions for growth and development in the Christ-life. In fact the man or woman fully converted to Christ will be at all times on the alert for the rescuing of the erring and fallen. This is also true in relation to churches and society in general; and I fear that the large, wealthy and self supporting congregations cease to reach out and extend the field of labor; and possibly we may sit under our own vine and fig tree, content with present achievements, setting down into a quiet, indifferent and do-nothing way. When we cease to advance, to move on, we begin to go back, to retrograde. The Missionary work is therefore of vital importance. The system which has been adopted by the district is good enough, and broad enough for all practical purposes. We have not failed because of a poor and weak plan. We have not been in need of funds—the treasury has not been empty since we began. Outside of the churches that are supporting pastors not very much evangelistic work has been done. The churches have been doing at least moderately well. Some have done excellent and some not so well. Riches and prosperity are apt to make one selfish, lazy and careless. This should be avoided. That is selfishness and indifference should be kept away from the heart; and this can be best accomplished by working to extend the borders of Zion.

We have failed to secure the labors of an evangelist for the district. We had tried hard but no one was to be obtained. We also tried to secure the services of some of the pastors for one series of meetings, and here we did not

succeed as well as we desired. In the coming year we shall again try to hire an evangelist for the district, who shall seek to convert sinners to Christ and build up churches by revival meetings. We shall also aim to secure one who will organize every small band of from ten, fifteen or more members in such a way that they may work and teach, through the Sunday school, prayer meeting and teacher's meetings.

Where there is a faithful band of ten members, they may organize a Sunday school—though small—that will in the course of a few years yield a rich and bountiful harvest. The great need of this age is sound, effectual teachings of God's word. Certainly ten good Christians full of the Holy Ghost can persuade one or more others who are not, to leave the ways of sin and live for Christ. One great drawback to more successful work is so many of us have depended upon the evangelist or preacher to do the work of converting the sinner from the error of his way. This particular phase of mission work I shall earnestly recommend to all christian workers, even five earnest, devoted, and self-sacrificing christians can conduct a successful Sunday school and bring souls to Christ. This is mission work.

Of course you must be equipped for the warfare, you must be soldiers drilled for the conflict; this weapon you must have at your every command, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. You must *know* it and know how to handle it. One reason, perhaps, why we could not secure pastors to do mission work was because the churches or their members would not consent to leave them have a vacation for the length of time. The church that has had two sermons every Sunday for nearly a whole year and a revival lasting from three to six weeks ought to be able to live, and show no signs of decay, in the absence of the pastor. They should be able to obtain sufficient spiritual food in the prayer meeting, teacher's meeting and Sunday school. And there are congregations where in the absence of the pastor some one of the deacons, or perchance even a lay member, could be able to fill the pulpit, without materially injuring the membership or even

the cause of the Master. Possibly the pastor might be the humiliated through the good gospel sermon of the new man in the pulpit, and therefore stimulate him to more earnest, effectual gospel effort. For if it be true—and it is—that five or ten *true Christians* can remain faithful to Christ, and enlarge their number, how much more easily should one hundred such Christians do aggressive work, or even two hundred. You see I would not have the well-equipped church neglected and grow weaker, but I would have her obey the injunction of Paul, when he said "ye that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak," and bearing the burdens of the weak churches you grow stronger yourself.

The Mission board needs your help, in money, in preaching, in prayer. They need *your co operation* in every good work and word. In the place of *begging* for an evangelist, we ought to have your services freely and cheerfully offered to us. The harvest is truly great, who will work for the Master? Who will be *self-sacrificing*? Why, the evangelist the pastor? Yes, but you are his brother, don't let him do all the self-denying, share with him. *All work together* with God. In conclusion I recommend to your attention the noble example of the little band of workers at Cornell, Ill. About twenty in number, who would give the Mission board and pastors no rest until they had secured the services of an evangelist or pastor of some congregation, and promises of funds from the board. And the result was their number swelled by ten new members and the old ones so enlivened that they are determined to do the same this fall. We have enough theory and system, we do need more work, work, work. Preaching the gospel and living it brings a dead sure success. Who will be workers for the King? Who will follow Jesus? Who will make reply? Who will be the first to say, "*Master here am I?*"

Lanark, Ill.

It is seldom that a man with a big income is ever persecuted for righteousness' sake.

Whenever the world comes face to face with unselfish love it has to stop and think.